Overture

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Overture

by amare

Summary

Weeks of dating, and they're going nowhere fast.

Notes

Set kind of obviously before the main events of "through a glass," but before "Tenerezza" chronologically. I told bluesyturtle that I'd never written porn for this fandom and found myself affronted by the very idea, and this was my first step toward remedying that.

My utmost thanks to everyone who gave me a hand—and it was more than the usual cast of characters this time. To TheLCM for thoughtful feedback that helped shaped this in subtle but important ways; to Randstad for talking about boners with me and being awesome as usual; to Fia for giving me a thorough beta of the first half and yelling at me about dumb commas (she isn't even in this fandom; my friends are ridiculous); to its in the water for encouraging me/more bonertalk; and to ac_123 for her typical amazing support. I think that's everyone? Minus M, my fellow soldier for truth. About butts.

Also, I tried a POV thing! Each section alternates. I don't know who I am anymore, tbh.

Did an edit on 2/10 that cleaned up some typographical errors and a glaring wine oversight pointed out by the lovely fitofpique. Let me know if I overlooked anything!

See the end of the work for more notes

They pulled up well after dark, Will's tiredness from a long day lifting as the miles were eaten between D.C. and Wolf Trap. Hannibal's Bentley was kept at a cozy seventy-two degrees, and Will wanted to press his face against the cool window. He wanted to see the shapes of trees dotting the side of the interstate and the snow melting just off the shoulder, but he knew he'd smudge the glass and Hannibal would inevitably take it to his detailer the next day.

It was their third date, an outing to a farmer's market near D.C. and then dinner at a restaurant in the city proper, and Will had allowed silence to consume him on the drive home. He'd meant to try to speak, but all of his scrimped and saved conversational currency was spent over dinner—flaky halibut and some sort of sprout salad and rolls so delicious Will had nearly asked to take some home. Hannibal didn't seem to mind his quiet, playing Vivaldi and steering expertly, hands at ten and two, wearing leather driving gloves that cupped the shape of his knuckles. Will thought he even heard him hum a few times.

It was their third date, and it felt like an outing with a friend. Most of their time together since Will's recovery was still haunted by awkwardness—which was solely Will's fault. He kept expecting to see Hannibal under a familiar lens, under familiar circumstances, but Hannibal made a point of keeping their interactions as far away from the BAU and his psychiatric office as possible. He hadn't said anything outright about staying away from there, but Will got the feeling he'd be kept in the waiting room if he showed up. Now, if Will wanted to see him, he couldn't ask *can you pencil me in?*—he had to ask *dinner at eight?* Their new ground felt untenable, undefined, especially since Will had yet to begin sessions with Hannibal's referral, and he kept opening his mouth to impart the kinds of things he'd tell a professional, not a … date. And there were only so many fishing anecdotes he could tell before Hannibal's patience wore out.

It was their third date, and they'd managed to kiss once. Twice, if the last time Will was in Hannibal's office counted. Nearly three weeks of dating, and Will was exasperated with himself. He'd planned to say or do something about it after dinner, but Hannibal was bundled up in a coat, a scarf, and those gloves and looked even more formidable than usual. Exaggerated somehow. Will felt as though he were staring at an abstract sculpture he was supposed to kiss, but he didn't even know where to put his hands.

Tonight, he decided, as Hannibal cut the engine and Will automatically reached for his seatbelt. *Kiss him tonight upon pain of death. You'll figure out where your hands go.*

His porch light was still on, shining warmth through a misty night. Will coughed when he stepped out of the car and a rush of damp, biting air invaded his lungs.

"So," he began, wondering if logistically it was better to invite him inside and kiss him there, or if Hannibal wanted to get a jump on his lengthy drive back to Baltimore and would prefer keeping it to the chilly porch. The first suggested more than a goodnight kiss, which Will was fine with, if only in theory; the second was a massive cliché and maybe too impersonal. "Do you—"

His front door was open, space enough for someone to slide through if they went sideways, and Will froze. His hand went automatically for a gun he didn't carry anymore and clenched around nothing furiously. Hannibal stopped at his back, his proximity almost protective, which meant he'd seen the same thing Will had.

"I will call the police. We should return to the car," Hannibal said, voice an urgent murmur near Will's ear, but that was when Winston scampered into view, tongue lolling and collar jingling, happy as anything. And covered in mud.

It clumped to his fur, mostly dry but some still wet and sticky near his muzzle. His paws were coated in it, and his coat looked an entire two shades darker.

His appearance heralded the rest of them. Thelonious nosed the front door open a little further, tracking dirty paw prints all the way down Will's porch. All of the others were straggling back from wherever they'd run off to, appearing from behind hedges and crawling out from under the house. He thought he saw the quick, dark shape of Digby running towards them from one of the fields. Winston was by far the muddiest. Winston, Will reflected with a tic in his jaw, liked to dig.

"Don't call anyone," Will said, unclenching his teeth to speak. "The dogs just got loose somehow. They'd be barking and growling up a storm if someone broke in."

"You're certain?"

"Yeah. Must have left the door unlocked." Upon noticing Hannibal, the dogs—most of them visibly tuckered out from *wreaking hell* for the hours Will had been gone—perked up and started rushing him. "Down," Will cautioned. He spun on his heel and tried to shoo the dogs away, but it was too late. Margaret was on her hind-legs, her front paws smearing mud and grit all over Hannibal's pristine coat. "Down," he said again, embarrassment flushing him as equally as his frustration.

She popped back down to all fours, but as if to further illustrate Will's failure as a dog owner, Thelonious tried to mount her in play. Only when Will whistled sharply did a few of them actually fall in line.

"It's fine," Hannibal assured him. He was slipping his leather glove off and giving them bare fingers to sniff. Will bit back a rebuke; his clothes were already dirty enough without giving them an invitation. "I haven't seen your pack since I dropped them off after your release. I wondered if they would remember me."

"Oh, they remember you, all right," Will said, glaring openly at Winston and bending over to grab Thelonious by the collar. "They're not usually like this. I think running loose went to their heads."

"I know they're not. They were very well-behaved in my home."

Will flushed again, not certain if the cause was gratitude or pleasure or the acute sensation of *weird* he felt when he remembered what Hannibal would do for him without blinking.

Sidelong, he started urging Winston back inside the house and said, "Did the dog sitter tell you that?"

Hannibal chuckled, doing his best to herd dogs up the steps without touching any of them. "No, the carpeting in my living room stands undamaged to tell the tale—and the dog walker I tipped handsomely," he admitted.

"I knew it." At the threshold of his front door, he reached inside and felt for the wall switch. "I knew you hired someone to help you. And here I thought you'd made such a, a romantic gesture, taking on the burden of watching my dogs all by yourself."

"I assure you, it was very romantic. She only took them for walks while I was at work."

While you were holding a vigil at my bedside, you mean, Will nearly said, but he bit the inside of his cheek instead, not knowing if they could really joke about that. He thought it would sober them. Right now, standing inside his house with the lights on and able to see what was tracked all over his floors and some of his furniture, he had no need for additional sobriety.

"Damn." He gave a warning *hisst* when Winston knocked into the back of his legs. "I'm gonna be scrubbing all night."

"Cleaning goes much faster with two," Hannibal said. A bland offer, one Will could turn down or accept at his leisure.

"You don't have to do that. It's already pretty dark."

"It's Friday evening," Hannibal said, giving the impression of a small shrug without twitching a single muscle. "I am in no hurry. And I'll sleep better knowing you're comfortable in a clean home."

"If you want," Will said reluctantly. "I'm gonna have to Sherpa them upstairs to the spare bathroom. It's too cold to hose them down outside."

"You should change first," Hannibal said, looking over Will in his date-night best; a favorite sweater and blazer with dirt along the cuffs. His pants were probably stained too. "Do you have somewhere we can enclose them while you wash?"

Hannibal had to know what a production bathing seven dogs made for. It was a headache to wrangle them all on a good night, but when they were excited and drunk with freedom? Will didn't want to be glad of the help, but he was. *Some date*, he chided himself, grunting with the thought. "Yeah. I've got a room upstairs that's basically covered in plastic. I'll do all the heavy lifting," he said, cautioning Hannibal away from any noble ideas. "You can help me with the clean ones."

"I'll help you in whatever way I can, Will," Hannibal said with a small smile, teasing him a little. That was new, too; he was less guarded now, quicker to smile and mean it. What Will had thought he'd known about Hannibal Lecter was being slowly, thoroughly eroded and replaced with, Will had to admit, something better. Not that it helped him relax.

Will surveyed the dogs milling around the living room. Only four of them, so the rest were probably still outside. He could keep the clean ones in the spare bedroom and the dirty ones in the master, since there was less to destroy in there. He'd long since packed it up and relegated himself to living entirely downstairs. Excepting his sleepwalking and throwing tennis balls for the dogs to chase up the stairs, he rarely disturbed the upper level.

"I'm going to change," he said at length, wincing when Hannibal started to pull of his coat, ginger for the stains on it. Underneath the coat and blazer, he wore a deep saffron-colored sweater, probably cashmere, and black slacks. "I'll bring you something to change into. Uh, wait here."

Will turned the corner and made his way up the stairs, ignoring the way his lungs seemed to squeeze at the idea of Hannibal in his clothes.

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Hannibal watched the muscles in Will's back tense and release as Will hunched over the antique bathtub, soaping their sixth dog of the night with one hand, another firmly in its scruff to keep it in place. White froth from the shampoo crept up his forearms, a few bubbles just under the point of his elbow.

He had found himself on the floor with his back against the wall, legs outstretched in front of him—it was less comfortable than a seated position, but there his only option was the closed toilet lid. Will was flustered by Hannibal's presence so close and informal in the small room; he deliberately kept his focus on the dogs, shushing and tsking at them, praising them when he adjusted the water temperature and tested it on the smooth skin of his inner wrist. Hannibal admitted to some fluster of his own. Will's biceps strained the fabric of his white shirt, and water sluiced over the lip of the tub had made the cotton-poly blend even more transparent. The gentleness he displayed with his dogs was nearly as intimate a sight as the shape of him through wet fabric.

There were three towels remaining in the pile to Hannibal's right. Will had a seemingly endless supply of them, mismatched and of varying sizes. He sat back with a sigh, resting on his heels, and flicked water and soap from his arms. The tub gurgled as it drained, the dog inside of it beginning to whine and clamber at the edge, its diminutive size making the slippery climb out impossible.

"Shh, shh, I got you," Will said, and Hannibal extended him a towel without being asked. The dog—Margaret—quieted when he wrapped his arms and the towel around her, rubbing gently between her ears. Her bath had been the swiftest of the bunch so far; they had started with the dirtiest, coincidentally the largest, and now were down to the smallest and least muddy. "One more," Will said, darting a glance to Hannibal and dropping it when he reacquainted himself with the sight of Hannibal in an old short-sleeved shirt, worn from endless cycles through the washer and dryer.

He still wore his own pants and socks. The pants were a loss, but he was happy to sacrifice them for the image of Will Graham, shy and unpresentable. He would sacrifice quite a bit more for less of a privilege. Hannibal smiled at Margaret when Will finally let her down,

petting her when she nosed at him. "I believe the floor downstairs is dry. May I rustle through your kitchen for a glass of water while you bathe the last?"

Will pushed himself up to standing with one fist braced against the floor, then brushed flecks of dried mud from the thighs of his trousers. "Um, sure. Actually—" he halted, and Hannibal stood himself, waiting expectantly. "I have some wine I thought you might like. You want to open it, let it breathe while I finish up here? It's on the counter."

"Gladly."

Will had decent taste in wine, despite his modest protestations of being *meat and potatoes*. Hannibal found the 2004 Bertani Armone next to two serviceable goblets and hunted until he located Will's corkscrew in a drawer. He had no decanter so easily found, but the presence of the wine and goblets was suggestion enough of Will's hopes—idle or otherwise—to tempt Hannibal into letting it aerate in situ. An easy sacrifice.

Will came downstairs fifteen minutes later, a few dogs following at his heels. His skin was still slicked with sweat from their hours of exertion, though his shirt had dried. He smelled like salt and dog shampoo, faint traces of earth.

"I have a decanter," Will said, rubbing his arms, nearly defensive when he saw the wine poured and waiting on the counter. "I'm not a complete plebeian," he said, both sour and amused. He gestured to a cupboard Hannibal had neglected. His small smile let Hannibal off the hook as he retrieved his goblet and swirled the wine within.

"I thought the dogs had done enough nosing around for all of us," Hannibal said. "And I admit that tonight my thirst has little patience."

"Hmm," Will said, burying his reaction in a sip. "Do you want to sit, or—" He must have considered his own living room, cramped but with excessive seating, and disregarded it. "The dining room?" he asked with even less enthusiasm.

"I'm happy to stand here," Hannibal said. "Don't trouble yourself. I was a little stiff after sitting for so long."

"Right." Will sipped again.

The Armone was fine even after such brief aeration, a pleasant spicy taste and dark red fruit so prevalent as to fill his nose with its smell. It glided smoothly over his tongue, and he held it in his mouth for a moment. The wine chased away the lingering sweetness of dessert and the parch from many hours of labor.

"It's nice," Will said, staring unseeingly at the glass in his hand, tired and a little heady with pleasure. His face had softened, tension in his muscles giving way. Hannibal appreciated his enjoyment and savored the taste of it with his next swallow. Notes of licorice lingered in the finish. So did the look on Will's face. "Good end to a shitty night."

"Was it so bad?" Hannibal asked mildly.

"Not the—*you* were fine. But washing seven dogs is a mood killer," Will said, giving an unconscious smack of his lips as he went back for more wine. Then, mid-sip, he stiffened—"Mmnf." Will swallowed quickly before asking in alarm, "What time is it?"

"Around eleven-thirty," Hannibal said. "I told you I'm in no hurry to leave. The wine and company are easy to savor."

Will made a disbelieving sound in his throat. "Oh, sure. We both need a shower, we just spent hours wrangling rank dogs, you *mopped my floor*, your coat is ruined, and you got to spend half of your day in a car for the privilege."

"And yet I would still call this evening a pleasure to spend with you."

Will observed him for a moment, the kitchen sink at his back, Hannibal leaning against the counter. The emotions that crossed his face he did not attempt to hide: surprise, disbelief, scorn, amusement, and ultimately the same look he got whenever Hannibal praised him. Nervous, flattered. Hannibal swallowed another succulent mouthful.

"The ridiculous thing is that I believe you," Will said, subdued by the moment. He tolerated Hannibal's gaze on him remarkably well for a few beats, but then bucked it. "But I'm starting to itch," he complained.

"So take your shower," Hannibal suggested. "I can keep the dogs company."

"The dogs are on their way to passing out," Will said. He put his glass down on the counter and nudged it back from the edge, exhaling deliberately. "I could use it, though."

"Then have it. I can wait for you or make my way home now, if you prefer."

Something in Will's manner—his barely restrained fidgeting, perhaps the decisiveness with which he set down the wine—perked Hannibal's metaphorical ears. He waited for Will's answer, amusement warming his chest, the same path the wine was taking as alcohol slipped into his bloodstream.

"Do you want one? I know I can't run your coat through the wash, but it feels rude to let you stand around covered in dog hair and mud."

"You're offering the use of your shower?"

Will nodded. Hannibal's lack of disbelief to the question had mollified him some. "Yeah. I've got another bathroom, so we won't have to use the one upstairs."

"As much as I appreciate your dogs, their scent is a little—"

"Disgusting?" Will offered with a teeth-baring smile.

"Strong."

"That's right, your miraculous nose. My house must be an olfactory delight," Will said, falling back to habitual feelings of irritation and self-flagellation over the state of his modest

farmhouse.

"I much prefer the smell of dog to the chemicals some prefer. It is nothing to remark on, Will."

Will measured his truth, found it acceptable, and shrugged the topic away, if not his own tension over it. "Well, either way, I know I want to get out of these clothes and into something clean."

"I'll take the second, then," Hannibal said.

Will's gaze darted up again, and he produced a wry smile that his blinking eyes and hesitant posture belied when he said, "If it's not … I've got another idea, if you're amenable."

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What the fuck are you doing?

Immediate regret and cringing embarrassment were not new feelings to Will Graham. He wished he could reel the words back in, but the look in Hannibal's eyes was too astute, too expectant, to bother trying any misdirection. Will picked up his wine, drank the rest of it in two determined gulps, and ignored the fact that he was digging the hole even deeper by telegraphing his anxiety.

"This is probably a little fast," Will said, tilting his glass to watch a dark droplet trickle from the rim to the bottom, settling there above the stem like a bead. "Maybe it's not such a great idea."

"If you're worried I'll reject an overture, you needn't be."

Well. That was something. Heat crept up the back of Will's neck; he felt it in his ears, his scalp. "That's—good," Will said. "But suggesting a joint shower three dates in seems like less of an overture and more like foreplay."

"Isn't it?" Hannibal asked, amused and so direct Will's shoulders tensed and lifted towards his ears. "Or did you have something else in mind when you suggested we both take off our clothes?"

The glass clipped the edge of the counter when Will set it down; a long, ringing note underscored his embarrassment. "I don't—"

"Will," Hannibal said gently, "I was joking. I would love to share a shower with you. And it need not be a prelude to something else."

He allowed himself to look above the neck of the borrowed T-shirt, the suggestion of Hannibal's collarbones under the fabric, and then at the corners of Hannibal's mouth as he regarded Will fondly. He didn't mind that Will had propositioned him—terribly—and then backed down from the broader implications of it. He wouldn't mind if Will wrapped himself in his shitty plastic shower curtain and shivered in the back of the stall the entire time; he was happy with whatever Will gave him.

It was a staggering thought, but gratifying in its own way. A kind of power Will wasn't accustomed to and was pretty sure he'd fumble.

"Yeah, all right," he said, swallowing his nerves and forcing his shoulders to lower.

The idea that he'd jumped from debating how to initiate a goodnight kiss to extending an invitation to *shared nudity* was typical of Will's stupid impulsivity, and he chuckled and shook his head, rubbing a hand over his jaw.

They were going to stand there until Will made the next move. Hannibal was clearly curious to know what had made Will laugh, but he was holding firm to the idea of taking only what Will gave and not asking for anything else. It was a nice reminder that their relationship, such as it was, would not have gotten off the ground if Will hadn't guessed the truth and forcibly pried it from him.

"Bathroom's through there," he said with a gesture toward the hallway, but his body moved toward Hannibal rather than out of the kitchen. It was a heavy-footed shuffle more than some loose-hipped seduction, but Hannibal crossed the rest of the divide and carefully put his hands on Will's waist.

Every kiss, not that there had been many, was different enough to merit cataloguing. Will opened his mouth up for this one almost immediately, bold with his successful *overture* and not wanting to wait or coax. Hannibal was not polite about taking advantage. When Will moaned, muffled, into his mouth, tasting the slight bitterness of wine, one of the dogs whined their displeasure over something that would definitely have to wait.

Hannibal let him pull back when the kiss was over, though he kept his hands on Will's hips—just the fingertips. His breathing was almost imperceptibly labored.

"It's been a lot longer than three dates for you, hasn't it?" Will said, letting his breath ghost across Hannibal's ear, and feeling a rush when Hannibal's fingers tightened.

"I had no expectations of intimacy then. I still do not," he said pointedly.

Will thought smiling might be inappropriate, considering the look on Hannibal's face. "Yeah. I know. But you still made us both wait by not saying anything," he said, disarming the accusation by pressing a kiss to the corner of Hannibal's jaw, just beneath the lobe of his ear.

Before Hannibal could do more than appreciate the touch—*knew I was right about that spot*, Will thought, a little smug—he disengaged. Will set expression to something as free of tension as he could and quirked a corner of his mouth for good measure. "I could scrub your back," he offered, eyebrows raising, forcing himself to remain steady. "If you want."

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Truthfully the prevailing emotion Hannibal felt when Will slipped off his second sock and straightened to face him, nude but for the tight cover of his threadbare briefs and with the bathroom fluorescents casting strange shadows around his collarbones, was awe.

His thought that afternoon, growing in conviction as he drove the route from his home to Will's, was to broach an end to their romantic relationship. A careful one; Will would fall upon any way to castigate himself if Hannibal did not frame it as a mutual decision. It had become evident over their weeks of dating, clandestine and stilted and with neither of them willing to place the other in an uncomfortable situation—Hannibal out of respect for Will's empathy, his recent illness, and his inexperience, and Will because he found the smallest missteps to be intractable embarrassments—that their flame had bloomed and then … hissed and spat in idleness.

It was not something Hannibal wanted. But he could not watch the uncomfortable cut of Will's mouth, the way he twined his napkin around his fingers and then brought it to his lap in stiff self-recrimination, how he often brought himself short mid-sentence and let their conversation fall to silence, and weigh the benefit of his pleasure against Will's lack of it.

He could admire Will's piercing mind from the safe distance of friendship. They could regain their more platonic dynamic with time and a concerted effort on both of their parts, and he could conceal his covetousness from Will until such a point as it disappeared entirely. He had concealed his regard before; he could do so again.

The idea of being unable to kiss or touch him—and to find more intimacy between them than they had already—did not sting as much as the idea of forever coming home to an empty house and taking up with open books.

Will was unpredictable, intelligent, surprisingly witty, kind, attractive, and unlike anyone Hannibal had ever encountered. Donald had once declared him a fan of the rarefied, and Will—Will was a cryptic, singular volume with its cover nearly always shut.

However, instead of Hannibal doing the right thing, instead of giving Will an out and driving back to an empty, overlarge house, he was standing in Will's small bathroom, watching the expansion of Will's ribs as he breathed and withstood Hannibal's scrutiny. Hannibal's body did not betray the surprise and welling pleasure within him. His gaze was level, hands calm and precise as they unbuttoned the last three buttons on his shirt.

The sight of Hannibal's bare chest tensed Will's rectus abdominis muscles, and Will turned to conceal his reaction by testing the shower's water temperature.

"How warm do you like it?" Will asked, valiantly pretending Hannibal was not working at the fastenings of his trousers. It would have perhaps behooved them to undress separately and for Hannibal to join Will in the shower after. The late hour and the opportunity to see Will in even less than a waterlogged shirt conspired to make him complacent.

"Scalding, but it's bad for the skin," Hannibal admitted.

Will leaned to adjust the dial, each vertebra in his spine pushing into relief against soft, unmarked skin. He was surprisingly hairless; there was a minimal circle around each nipple, a suggestion of crisper hair leading downward from his navel.

Hannibal's belt buckle made a bell-like sound as he stepped out of his trousers and draped

them over the counter. He caught the look Will tried to keep peripheral, glancing from Hannibal's shoulders to his legs, his groin, and back to his kneecaps.

"I like it hot too," Will said, his forearm under the pelting of the water. "Always have. Except for the height of summer in the gulf and before I went into the hospital …" He trailed off and set his jaw, assuming the topic was ill suited. Hannibal did not find the reminder of his encephalitis off-putting. If anything, it was a welcome contrast to the healthy man standing in front of him. "Water's nice," he said.

Will pushed his briefs down his hips with no fanfare, exposing the pale sides of his buttocks and his hips. He stepped inside of the shower before Hannibal could do more of an accounting, but while he slid half of the frosted glass door closed, he then slid the other half open. An invitation. One Hannibal would happily accept.

When Hannibal was nude as well, he crossed the few feet to find Will's face upturned to the faucet and his eyes squeezed closed against the pounding stream. Immersing himself in stimuli to drown out the loudness of his uncertainty, the nervousness stooping his shoulders. Hannibal stepped into the shower behind him, errant droplets of water beading on his skin as he moved. Will's body blocked most of the spray even as Hannibal guided the second door to enclose them, but Hannibal did not mind the cold. The idea that Will had wanted intimacy enough to suggest this would keep him warm in the back of the stall, and the view in front of him was lovely.

Up, up. Smallish feet; calves flaring wide; lean, strong legs corded with runner's muscles; a round, compact rear; all of it splendidly formed and leading to that smooth, straight back. Hannibal's study was leisurely, and his heavy inhale was nearly eclipsed by the sound of running water.

Will scrubbed at his face and pulled out from the water, gulping down air, and craned to look at Hannibal over his shoulder. "You're cold," he said, turning, putting the water to the back of him. From this visage, he seemed less embarrassed by his nudity. Hannibal trained his eyes above Will's waist. "Sorry," he said, filling the humid space with the sourness of regret.

Hannibal reached out and brushed his fingers against his forearm, neutral, and shook his head.

Will surged forward and kissed him, and Hannibal's light touch turned into a full grip on Will's arm. Will shook him off and twisted a handful of Hannibal's hair, his wet face pushing wetness onto Hannibal's own. His lips were very soft, and Will groaned—the regret was relief now, the breaking of tension—when Hannibal reciprocated.

He worked Will's lower lip with his tongue and teeth until it was tender, but the intensity of their kissing soon leveled out until they were languid, then breaking apart to breathe. Will exhaled, open-mouthed, against Hannibal's cheek and near his ear. He rubbed his lips against Hannibal's jaw, testing the sensation.

This was the intimacy Will had craved. The evidence of action, or the end of inertia, certainly, but something soothing. This quiet closeness, as nonsexual as two naked men

exchanging kisses could be. Will's eyes were heavy-lidded, and he did not seem in a hurry to redirect them as he studied Hannibal's mouth and neck.

Silently, Hannibal urged Will back under the water with hands to his waist. The heat could only aid in lessening the remaining tension in his muscles.

Will's lips curved before he turned around again, and Hannibal was content to watch him enact the routine of a shower. He seemed to enjoy the pressure of the water against his face, even the sensitive areas of his eyelids and his Adam's apple. He did not shampoo his hair, but he picked up a bottle of drugstore body wash and used his own hands to clean himself with it. The smell was acrid, but Will used a thankfully small amount.

He did slowly position himself closer to Hannibal, shoulders working as he rinsed suds from his chest. It was another invitation. Hannibal took that one as readily as he had the first, pressing a kiss to Will's shoulder, resting his cheek against it after. As if trying to find new and unexpected ways to surprise him, Will seemed to relax even more.

Hannibal trailed slow, purposeful fingers up Will's sides, and Will stiffened initially but breathed out on a shudder that declared ticklishness instead of hesitation. The touch was still designed to be a balm, not an incitement, even if Will's buttocks were inches from his groin and Hannibal had to cant his hips to keep them from colliding.

Will's body language was more relaxed than Hannibal would have assumed, although there was still tightness in his shoulders. That was by no means a promise or consent, so Hannibal kept his mouth closed as he trailed a few more kisses across Will's shoulder blade and rubbed circles over two of Will's ribs.

Eventually Will caught Hannibal's hand and squeezed it before he guided it down and away. One firm, pale globe caught Hannibal's hip as Will turned.

He stared at Hannibal, looking for or at something. The water had flattened Will's hair to his scalp, and the part of it revealed the smallest beginnings of a bald spot. His stubble looked like dirt against a boyish, clean face. His stomach was slowly gaining a small pouch that rigid posture could not eliminate; his penis was near to flaccid. *A drowned rat*, Hannibal thought, letting it float away. All other parts of his mind were consumed by how much he wanted the picture in front of him.

Will licked water from his lips and nodded to himself. "You can touch me. Wherever you want."

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Hannibal didn't exactly jump after that like a bull after a red flag. He stood there, head tilted, dry—but for some patches Will had left—and serious. Will licked his lips again. The water pounding the back of his neck and his back was close enough to his ears to sound like drums.

His hands went back to Will's waist, as if that was all the exploration he wanted to make. Will had felt Hannibal's regard, the careful glances, but he constrained himself to simple places, as

if Will was going to spook.

Will knew what it was to be stared at and broken down to his component parts, and Hannibal's appraisal—it wasn't that. It wasn't debasing. It was nice. It was nice to be touched with desire rather than because of it.

They were getting good at making out. Will was getting an idea of where to put his hands while they did. And the naked thing. It was new, but not daunting as he'd assumed. He knew what genitalia looked like; it hadn't suddenly morphed into something alien. Hannibal's cock, soft and uncut, a neat thatch of pubic hair between his hips, was almost laughably unimposing. The idea of being able to look at it was more of a shock to his system than the actual glances he snuck, ducking his head to kiss Hannibal's neck.

Hannibal's shoulders were strong, his back broad, and the hair on his chest felt strange against Will's nipples when he pushed himself closer. Will caught his earlobe between his teeth again, encouragement, and felt Hannibal's hands stall out on his hips. Nearly at his ass.

He almost laughed. Hannibal wanting something so base. Sex was one thing—*coupling in front of the fireplace or in a four-poster bed*, some snide, nervous part of Will had classified it in regards to Hannibal Lecter—but wanting to grope him like a teenager was another. And Hannibal wanted it bad. His breathing deepened; he nosed at Will's hair, his hands deceptively still, even as Will brought the lower parts of their bodies into contact. Even as his cock thickened against Will's thigh, a progression that felt immediate and excruciatingly slow at the same time. Will's body perked up in response. He was easy to overwhelm during sex; it wasn't exactly sensitivity, just too much input. Hannibal's nipple caught against his and dragged for a second, and Will shivered.

"Touch me," he said again. He closed his eyes when he got a flash of what he thought was Hannibal's desire. He wanted to put his hands where Will was the tensest. The globes of his ass. The small of his back. His perineum. His sit bones. He wanted to work them until Will was boneless and gasping.

Finally, Hannibal grabbed him. His palms skated over his skin, a startling sensation after the ceaseless but fluid touch of the shower stream. He squeezed once he got a good hold, and Will grunted, rocking forward.

"Yeah, like that," he said. A persistent ache built between his legs, not quite in his dick but close, maybe in those areas he sensed Hannibal wanted to touch. He scraped his teeth against Hannibal's shoulder when those hands slid lower, nearly cupping the tops of his thighs.

It wasn't what he'd envisioned when he'd blurted out his proposition; it was far easier than the explicit images he'd backed away from, and it was more intimate than the scene of efficient domesticity he'd pictured with about as much enthusiasm as he had the former. That was par for the course by now. Hannibal kept shattering Will's expectations, and he did it so well Will barely felt sheepish in their rubble.

"Will?" Hannibal asked, a rumble in his chest that buzzed nicely against Will's.

"I told you to touch me," Will said, not an answer to any question asked. He closed his eyes and realigned their bodies, rutting against Hannibal's firm stomach. Hannibal's cock slid under his, which was the weirdest sensation of the night by far, nudging his balls. Will sucked a breath in and let his head rest on Hannibal's shoulder, still blocking out sight.

"I would give you pleasure," Hannibal said, kissing Will's temple.

Will read between the lines and nodded, soundlessly laughing because Hannibal couldn't just say something as mundanely dirty as *I want to make you come*.

Hannibal took his mouth and reached one hand around, still slick with water, to curl around the base of Will's cock. His movements were limited by their closeness; he knocked his knuckles against own stomach a few times. Will's toes curled against the unyielding bottom of the tub. Each of Hannibal's pulls was exquisite. He'd picked up on what Will wanted so fast Will's mouth fell open in dumb pleasure, his body straining towards each firm jerk. Will got off like this, when he wasn't lazy or distracted; a steady, determined build toward orgasm. He figured it was bad form to be this close to coming already, but Hannibal was doing it on purpose. He wanted it. He wanted to see it.

Will clenched his jaw and gritted his teeth. His hands were tight fists braced against Hannibal's back, and animalistic, shocked sounds came through his closed mouth and rose in pitch as Hannibal milked them out of him. He thought he should back up to really let Hannibal see, give him what he wanted, but he couldn't move on his own volition. Every twitch and jerk was orchestrated by Hannibal's hand, every pulse of his orgasm as he shot into the ring of Hannibal's fingers. Will shook through it, muffling the rest of his noises against Hannibal's shoulder.

Hannibal stopped before the grip got to be too much, stroking Will's back one-handed until he'd rinsed the come away, and then both arms were around him. The embrace was a cradle, and Will sunk into it for a moment.

Will blinked his eyes back open eventually, unsteadily detaching himself from Hannibal but staying close. Neither of them was properly under the shower, and he wondered how cold Hannibal was—until more thoughts came rushing in: his awareness of Hannibal's erection, knowledge of what he must have looked like, stupefied by orgasm, and a growing irritation with himself that he couldn't just reach out and do what Hannibal had done for him.

Not that Will had much of a chance. Hannibal, his lips parted, a hint of teeth above his lower lip, wrapped the same hand that had brought Will off around his cock and worked himself over. Clumsy, heart rate kicking up with nervousness, Will drew them close again. Hannibal bowed his head, and it was Will's turn to inhale, to familiarize himself, ghosting his lips against his cheekbone and the spot he'd found earlier. Only three full strokes and he was splashing against Will's hip. It couldn't have been warmer than the water at Will's back, but each white rope that fell against his skin felt like a hot brand.

"That's it," he said, helpless to do more than kiss the side of Hannibal's face. His hand spasmed when Will spoke, tightening as he pulsed, the push and pull of skin exposing and nearly eclipsing the swollen head of his cock. Will got a strange jolt, a flood of arousal that

he couldn't do anything about. He kissed Hannibal's tense mouth before he said something else.

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Will offered him a clean towel before padding off naked in search of his robe. Emanating bathroom light made him a pale column until he disappeared into the darkness of the hall entirely.

Their moment in the shower was over, but the touch Will had given Hannibal's back as he went and the ease of his continued nudity allowed a mutually quiet, content feeling to continue outside of its walls. His own face face, with hooded eyes and a fading flush to his cheeks, stared out at him from the mirror as he dried himself. He processed what he saw but felt apart from it. The moments after completion, Will pressing their foreheads together and then bringing them both under the warm water, were a temptation to linger in, to revisit. But he'd acknowledged himself that it was over. Hannibal, now dry, knotted the towel at his waist.

With the bathroom door open, the dogs were curious to investigate what they'd been banned from. By the time Will came back, wet hair pushed back from his face, blue tartan robe regrettably covering him to the knee, a pile of folded clothes in his hands, three of them were in there with Hannibal. Margaret pushed curiously at his left calf with her front paws.

"Really?" Will asked, amused and exasperated.

"Your belief in their readiness to sleep may have been optimistic," Hannibal said.

"Lucky us," Will muttered, then shook his head and changed gears. He held out the clothes still in his arms. "Pajamas, unless you want to make the drive back tonight."

"I don't," Hannibal reassured him. He took the pile: a pair of flannel sleeping pants and a T-shirt, both unworn.

"The dogs don't sleep on the bed with me, so there's plenty of room for you. If you're all right with sleeping in a room full of mutts and a serial cover hog." Post-orgasm was a good state for Will. There was none of the usual edge behind his words. He wasn't sure of how to adapt to Hannibal's presence or Hannibal's own eagerness to be there, but that was expected. They both clearly knew the necessity of negotiation.

"Have you considered the possibility that I'm a difficult bedmate?"

"You?" Will snorted. "Pull the other leg." His gaze traced the pattern of Hannibal's chest hair, and he did not attempt to mask his attention.

Under that study, Hannibal removed the towel and dressed in the flannel pants. Will followed that progression as well. The conviction he'd had about their clay feet, the concerns he'd had about having to coax Will every step of the way if they should ever begin moving in the first place, seemed now like catastrophizing. His blindness to what roiled under Will's surface was

vexing, but it was also an intriguing experience. Hannibal wanted to explore it. That urge was not new in Will's company.

"I have stuff for breakfast in the morning," Will said, tone distracted as Hannibal slipped the T-shirt on next. "You're gonna have to fight me to cook it."

"I'm a guest in your home. I will smile and eat whatever you put in front of me."

"Mmhm," Will said, arms crossing over his chest. "That didn't sound like faith in my culinary skills."

"Well, I didn't assume you'd offer breakfast only to poison me."

"No, I offered breakfast as a romantic gesture. You're just a snob." He grinned sharply and nodded to the sink counter Hannibal stood by. "There's a spare toothbrush in the last drawer on the left." Leaving Hannibal to it, he tossed over his shoulder, "I do a mean fry-up, and I've never split a Hollandaise sauce in my life."

"Will, breakfast tomorrow sounds delightful, thank you," Hannibal called after him, the wry smile he wore in his voice.

When he came out of the bathroom and made his way to the living room, tasting cheap synthetic mint in his tongue and through his sinus cavities, Will was settled on the bed. He was sitting up, wearing much less clothing—a pair of underwear and another of the tatty shirts of which he seemed so fond—and there was only a little wariness in his eyes as Hannibal picked out a path through the dogs sprawled out on the floor leading to the bed.

"Sorry," he said, unnecessarily, as Hannibal lifted his side of the covers and kneeled to join him.

"I prefer sleeping in a room full of freshly washed mutts to sleeping alone." He preferred this to sleeping without Will, specifically. Hannibal did enjoy the solitude and the trappings of his own bedroom to sleeping with a partner. Their next encounter would have to occur in that bed. He wanted the smell of Will in his sheets, evidence of him in the corners of his room by way of discarded clothes.

"Yeah, your big, wide, comfortable bed. How will it ever compare?" He studied Hannibal, jaw working as it did when he was considering something, and said, "You look good in my clothes."

"You've never worn these," Hannibal said, nearly closing his eyes at the feel of Will's leg against his. A liberty he had not anticipated.

"They're still mine."

Hannibal made an affirmative sound, and Will kissed him, chaste and with a palm to Hannibal's face. He did not tell Hannibal that he preferred to sleep as unencumbered as possible; that touch now was welcome, but during sleep a nuisance. As Hannibal had no wish

to make Will uncomfortable and was used to keeping to one side of a mattress, he accepted the kiss for what it was and enjoyed the salt of Will's skin over the terrible toothpaste.

"Pleasant dreams, Will," he said. Will gave him a single, wondering blink before he nodded.

"Can you get the light?" he asked, and Hannibal did, enshrouding them in darkness.

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The ceiling gave Will no escape, no blank slate to project his thoughts onto. He woke relatively rested, but as sunlight crept in, so did an over-awareness of Hannibal next to him. It had been some years since he'd slept the night with a body next to him, and every exhale, every twitch, the heat of him, was too stark to ignore. He wanted to get up, but he thought it would be rude to leave him in a cold bed so early, and that it would wake him.

I should let the dogs out. I should put on some coffee. He'd understand. But Will continued to lay there.

Every moment spent not spent fixated on sheer proximity was turning the night before over in his mind. Each time he fucked up—mixed signals, the mess the dogs made of his house, his utter failure to reciprocate sexually—was examined and worried like a splinter.

"I can hear the projector in your mind whirring along," Hannibal said from beside him, calm and deep with sleep.

"Morning," Will said.

He shifted then, finally stretching stiff legs and turning his head to see what Hannibal looked like in the morning. About what Will expected. Hair smooth, bangs falling into his face, maybe a little bit of pale stubble on his chin. What he hadn't expected was the slow burn that went through him when he saw it. His mind had been so fixed on Hannibal's body that it had neglected awareness of his own. Morning wood and morning breath and that thing his hair did if left to dry squished against a pillow. Will shifted again, awkward.

"Did you sleep well?" Hannibal asked, rising to lean on one arm. The shape he made in Will's covers was an embarrassing revelation. Will swallowed and ignored the further swelling of his cock.

"Yeah. You?"

Hannibal gave a nod of affirmation, and he was slow in extending his hand and letting a broad palm settle on Will's arm. "It's still quite early," he said. The touch was an overture, Will saw, a testing weight.

"I think the dogs are still asleep," Will said. He kept the expectant tremble in his body contained. His hips wanted to rise. Hannibal was so close, and the way he was looking at Will —

"Yes?" Hannibal asked, his thumb sweeping over Will's bicep. Playing with the edge of his sleeve.

If he wanted to blow Will in a room full of nosy dogs, that was his business. Will lifted his head from the pillow to kiss him, sloppy and stale, and Hannibal immediately set to work. His shirt was raised enough to give him room to explore the cage of Will's ribs. He checked the sensitivity of Will's right nipple with two gentle fingers and nipped Will's mouth when he made an involuntary noise.

Will urged him on and kicked the covers away from his legs, no doubt rousing a dog while he did so. He didn't care. He looked easy and horny and probably fish-belly pale against his blue sheets. He didn't care.

Hands that learned efficiency early on and refined it with a scalpel pulled his boxers off in one fast pull. Will's dick, near to hard but not all the way there yet, rested against his stomach. Hannibal ducked down, not even letting Will learn the weight of him pressing him into the mattress, not sparing more time for kissing. He licked from root to tip, so unhurried and unshowy that Will's heels dug into the mattress.

"Shit," Will said, before he remembered to close his mouth.

It was clearly not his first time, or maybe it was the same thing as in the shower. Hannibal just read how to touch him. Will could do the same thing, more or less, but he had a learning curve, and Hannibal was unerring. The suction, the hollowing of his cheeks that made his angles severe and unfamiliar, the way he kept a hand on Will's thigh to keep him spread and flush to the mattress. Will was fully hard so fast under that merciless sucking, wet enough for an easy glide when Hannibal took him deeper, but with just enough friction. He didn't let the head of Will's cock catch too deep in his throat, but the sensation was warm and tight and just as demanding as his handjob.

Will's back started to bow when Hannibal rubbed at his balls, and Will's hands wanted to grab a fist's worth of pale brown hair. It wouldn't be unwelcome. Hannibal would like it, proof of Will's desire. But sex could so quickly slip from good to uncomfortable, and feeding off of his own base urges—or someone else's—was a quick way to get it there.

"You're getting me close," Will said, a warning and a compliment in a garbled voice, and Hannibal made a satisfied noise.

He didn't have the ability to turn his head and look at the clock, to time how ridiculously fast Hannibal was hurtling him towards orgasm, and he was glad for it. Will watched as Hannibal redoubled his efforts, eyes closed and lashes fanned as though appreciating a fine taste of something, one of his goddamn wines, and Will could see the outline of his cock pushing against the flannel of his borrowed pajamas.

His generous mouth formed a ring of suction around the head of Will's cock, and that was when Will's leg thumped hard against the mattress. "I'm—" he said, desperately, and then the first spurt hit Hannibal's tongue. He took the rest deeper, keeping Will wet and warm as he shivered and came and finally pushed his fingers into Hannibal's bangs.

Once his senses came back to him, and Hannibal let him slip soft from his mouth, Will heard one of the dogs itching something. He closed his eyes and reminded himself of why he usually jerked off in the shower.

The aftershocks lasted longer this time. Will was nearly dozing, flushed and sated with so many chemicals flooding his brain so quickly, when Hannibal stroked his hip and arranged the covers around them both.

He kissed Will's mouth and Will blindly opened for it. The taste of himself on Hannibal's saliva wasn't too strange; he'd kissed people after they'd gone down on him before, so most of his reservations had to do with his unbrushed teeth.

Will's hands, curious and not quite aimless, started plucking at the band to Hannibal's pants when Hannibal stopped him and started in on his neck. Will's eyes popped open then, ready to argue, but Hannibal's face was slack with pleasure, and if Will had to name the emotion humming from him, it'd be gratification. That was for Will, sure, but it was purely self-indulgent.

Haltingly, saving it for a later conversation, Will let it be.

"I believe," Hannibal said in a languorous tone, tilting Will's head to get at his neck and scrape it with his teeth, "you promised me breakfast?"

He nearly butted his chin into Hannibal's eye with his sudden laughter. The chuckling came out of him raspy at first, and then one of the dogs stood up and jingled his collar. The strangeness of the moment saw him laughing full-throated and awash with endorphins. They were—it was *absurd*. And kind of amazing. Hannibal's smile up at Will was at once beatific and wolfish.

End Notes

As usual, you can harass me on tumblr: ahmandahjean.tumblr.com

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